



Army Safety Gram

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



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Fighting Off Old Man Winter

For many people, working or playing in cold weather can be a positive experience. You may feel invigorated by the bracing air and feel like doing your work with more physical energy than usual. When it comes to leisure, cold weather offers many enjoyable activities whether it's skiing, skating, snowmobiling or ice fishing.

Unfortunately, all the enjoyable aspects of working or playing out in cold weather can turn negative if you are not dressed warmly or dryly enough. Never underestimate winter's blast. They call winter an "old man" but he's far from frail. In fact, he's apt to strike a deadly blow when you least expect it.



Here are some tips for battling old man winter

- ♦ **Watch out for the sun.** The season's frigid temps shouldn't fool you — snow reflects more than 75% of the sun's damaging ultraviolet rays. Protect your face and eyes from the sun before they go out to work or play.
- ♦ **Make sure you winter gear is the right fit.** Winter wear should fit properly, but gear shouldn't be so tight that it restricts movement. This is particularly true for footwear. Boots that are too tight constrict blood flow, causing feet to become even colder. When sizing shoes for outdoor winter activities, allow room for an extra pair of socks.
- ♦ **Be smart about clothing choices.** When heading out to work or play, make sure you are dressed warmly in layers that are wind and waterproof. If possible, opt for wool instead of cotton.
- ♦ **Get around safely.** Driving in winter can be dangerous, so you should make sure you're ready for any situation. Make sure your car is winterized with proper tires, antifreeze, and windshield washing fluid. Prepare your car for emergencies by keeping a first-aid kit, blankets, shovel, rock salt, ice scraper, water, and nonperishable snacks in your trunk.
- ♦ **Practice safety when playing outdoors.** Ice skating should only be done on ice that has passed proper inspection. Sledding paths shouldn't be too crowded or too close to roadways. If you're trying skiing or snowboarding for the first time, consider getting lessons from an instructor. While out on the slopes, consider wearing helmets and gloves with built-in wrist guards. This can prevent serious injuries.
- ♦ **Eat healthy snacks.** Good nutrition can help fight off colds and flu, so strengthen your immune system with a balanced diet. Try dried and fresh fruits, sliced raw vegetables, whole-wheat crackers with cheese, and yogurt for snacks instead of that donut or cookie.
- ♦ **Stay hydrated.** Although you may not be sweating as much as you do in warm-weather, you still need to keep hydrated. In addition to water, consider low-sugar juices or decaffeinated tea and hot cocoa. Avoid caffeinated and alcoholic beverages. They can dehydrate you more.
- ♦ **Make sure your home is safe and ready for winter weather.** Be prepared for unpredictable weather conditions by stocking up on essentials, such as extra batteries for flashlights, bottled water, first aid staples, and nonperishable food items. Safety kits can help protect your family in extreme situations.
- ♦ **Get your kids prepared.** Make sure your kids have the right clothing for the weather conditions. Place an extra pair of gloves and tissue packs in their book bags. These necessities will help prevent the spread of germs, and come in handy if a glove goes missing.
- ♦ **Heat your home safely.** Make sure your home's heating equipment and your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors function properly. If you use a space heater, make sure it is UL or CE approved and keep it away from pets and small children. Finally, don't forget to discuss fire safety with your family each winter; the likelihood of indoor fires increases during the colder months.

With its cold and often stormy weather, winter presents many safety challenges. Being prepared and following these few simple safety tips can help you stay safe and warm this season.

